



**United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

**Frank J. Magill,
United States Attorney**

David Anderson, Public Affairs Specialist
(612) 664-5684; cell: (612) 730-2251

News Release

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Prior Lake man pleads guilty to distributing controlled substances

The owner of a pharmaceutical company that collects outdated, recalled or excess controlled substances pleaded guilty yesterday in federal court to distributing controlled substances.

Mark Andrew Goetz, 41, Prior Lake, pleaded guilty to one count of distribution of oxycodone and alprazolam. He entered his plea July 28 in Minneapolis before United States District Court Judge James Rosenbaum. Goetz was indicted on May 20.

According to Goetz's plea agreement, he admitted that on Jan. 10 he distributed 99 tablets of Xanax (which contains alprazolam), and that on May 6 he distributed 1,274 tablets of Oxycontin and 245 tablets of Xanax.

According to a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) affidavit, Goetz owns Pharmaceutical Returns, a company that is a reverse distributor of controlled substances. The company, located in Northfield, is authorized by the DEA to collect the substances, return them to drug companies for credit or destroy them at approved incinerators.

In January 2009 investigators learned that Goetz was distributing controlled substances he obtained from DEA registrants to a drug customer just prior to or shortly after scheduled destructions of evidence. Officers arranged a controlled purchase on Jan. 10 at Goetz's residence of 99 tablets of Xanax. A second controlled purchase of 1,274 tablets of Oxycontin and 245 tablets of Xanax was conducted by the DEA and the task force on May 6 in a parking lot of a south Minneapolis apartment complex.

Goetz was stopped by police as he was leaving the parking lot, and officers seized a small amount of a controlled substance and a laptop computer.

Goetz faces a potential maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. Judge Rosenbaum will determine his sentence at a future date.

This case is the result of an investigation by the DEA. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas M. Hollenhorst.